



Bald eagles in Baggs

Habitat is where it's at!

January 2016



We hope you enjoy reading about the adventures of the **Green River Region** personnel as they work to *Conserve Wildlife and Serve People!*

Special dates and points of interest:

- IT IS A NEW YEAR-DON'T FORGET TO BUY NEW LICENSE AND CONSERVATION STAMP.
- DON'T HAVE A COMPUTER? EVERY REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE GAME AND FISH HAS A COMPUTER AT THE FRONT COUNTER FOR PUBLIC USE.
- DON'T HAVE YOUR HUNTER SAFETY CERTIFICATE? CHECK FOR UPCOMING COURSES ONLINE AT [HTTP://WGFD.WYO.GOV](http://wgfd.wyo.gov).
- REMEMBER: YOU CAN BUY ALL YOUR HUNTING LICENSES, REQUIRED STAMPS AND MANY MORE PRODUCTS AT THE WGFD WEBSITE FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN COMPUTER!
- LOST YOUR HUNTER EDUCATION CARD? YOU CAN PRINT AS MANY COPIES OF YOUR CARD AS YOU WANT, FOR FREE, AT THE WGFD WEBSITE.
- APPLICATION PERIOD FOR BIG GAME LICENSES OPENED JANUARY 4.
- DEADLINE FOR MOOSE, BIGHORN SHEEP, MOUNTAIN GOAT AND BISON APPLICATIONS IS FEBRUARY 29.



In December, Green River wildlife personnel completed mule deer classifications. Mountain View Wildlife Biologist Jeff Short was able to snap these photos of a large buck from the helicopter. Classification counts are how the Game and Fish estimates the number of fawns and bucks in the deer herds and it can easily be done in a short amount of time from a helicopter. Post hunting season public input meetings are being held in January. Hunting season open houses will be held the week of March 15-19, with a final public meeting in April.

Region Wildlife Violations ~ Illegally taken mule deer head concealed under camper trailer

Game Wardens Andy Countryman and Nick Roberts investigated the illegal killing and waste of three mule deer north of Evanston. Two does and one fawn were shot with a .22 caliber firearm on the evening of December 18th on the east side of Woodruff Narrows Reservoir. No attempt was made to salvage any meat from the deer. No suspects have been identified as of yet. (photo below, compliments of Nick Roberts)



Evanston Game Warden Nick Roberts was able to successfully prosecute Evanston resident Bradford Watts on several game violations from the October deer season. Mr. Watts harvested two mule deer bucks on one general license. (photo below, left) At least one of the deer was shot from a vehicle and both were on private property he did not have permission to hunt. Mr. Watts attempted to hide the second deer by covering it with a coat and stashing it in the sage brush. Mr. Watts was charged \$750 in fines and had his hunting privileges suspended for two years. This case was made possible by a tip from a local hunting guide.



Enforcement Happenings
There are unsolved poaching cases in the Green River Region. If you have any information about any wildlife violation please contact your local game warden or the **STOP Poaching Hotline** at:
1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847)
• You can also report a wildlife violation at the WGFD website <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>

On October 4th Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird responded to a report of a wasted deer in the Coal Creek drainage in deer hunt area 135. Baird said the report was an apparent waste of edible portions of a mule deer buck. While investigating the report of the wasted deer Warden Baird contacted the suspect and found that he had not tagged the first deer and was still hunting deer.



"Over the course of three days," Baird said, "Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas and I conducted interviews and collected evidence, while the suspect continued to deny any wrong doing and remained uncooperative.

Ultimately, Shawn P. Coburn, Evanston, WY, admitted to killing a four-point buck mule deer, intentionally not tagging that deer and to continuing to hunt deer, and attempting to take an over limit of big game. He also admitted to wasting edible portions of the deer in the field."

On January 7 in Lincoln County Circuit Court, Coburn plead guilty to charges of failing to tag a big game animal, waste of edible portions of a big game animal, and attempting to take an over limit of big game.

The court and state agreed that these were very serious violations," Baird said. "Mr. Coburn had multiple records of similar previous violations and was in violation of a previous court ordered firearms restriction from a family violence conviction in 2014.

"He was placed on unsupervised probation for 18 months, must serve six days in the Lincoln County jail, with 264 days suspended and ordered to pay \$1060.00 in fines. The court suspended Mr. Coburn's hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges for seven years. He may not fish, trap, guide, or possess a firearm where wildlife can be taken until 2023." Page 2



Photo above: Mule deer with pinkeye

"Increased snow in the area near Cokeville and Kemmerer has helped mountain lion hunters during late November and December," Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas said. "Both outfitters and local hunters have taken advantage of tracking conditions, and have harvested several mountain lions in Hunt Area 14, which has a mortality quota of 15 lions. Last winter, only seven mountain lions were harvested, and the season remained open until the end of March."

"Dogs are allowed when hunting mountain lions in Wyoming. Hunters are reminded that other regulations such as the wearing of fluorescent orange, hunting hours, legal firearms, and reporting of harvested mountain lions can be found in Commission Regulation Chapter 42 or the mountain lion hunting brochure provided by the Department."

The status of the *mortality quota* for any mountain lion hunt area can be checked 24 hours per day by calling **1-800-264-1280**.

(Photo, right, compliments of Neil Hymas)
Laverne Marchione with harvested lion.

Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas said that four separate yearling male mule deer were reported or observed near Cokeville that were acting confused or blind within the first two weeks of December.

Inspection of the young bucks by Hymas confirmed that the deer had advanced cases of infectious keratoconjunctivitis, which is known more commonly as *pinkeye*.

"Deer that have advanced pinkeye often seem confused and walk in circles as blindness sets in," Hymas said. "Drainage is often visible around the deer's eye and the corneas may appear opaque. There is no practical way to cure the bacterial infection in wild animals, and infected deer are commonly euthanized to prevent suffering and the possibility of spreading the disease to other deer."

"The relatively high prevalence of keratoconjunctivitis in young male mule deer suggests that a behavior related animal-to-animal mode of transmission spreads the disease in this species. Reports of deer affected by "pinkeye" seem to occur more common during the late fall when deer migrations and the rut have deer concentrated and contacting each other."



Hams Fork snowmobile trail a success ~ Important moose and other wintering wildlife protection



Photo: Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird

Please observe critical wildlife winter range near the Hams Fork and on other trails.

*"Last year WGFD Lincoln Moose herd managers met with the Forest Service and Wyoming State Park, Historical Sites and Trails to discuss grooming the Ham's Fork Road from Beaver Cr. to the West Fork of the Hams Fork thru critical moose winter range," said **Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird**. "In the past, this has been a contentious issue with concerns as to its effect on wintering moose along this river. After some good discussion all agreed that we would try grooming this trail this year with the provision that the forest service post more signs and enforce already mandated regulations prohibiting snowmobile use along the river, west of the Ham's Fork Rd., between the forest boundary and the Elk Creek campground."*

"Some of the reasoning behind this decision was that when the trail is not groomed it becomes so rough that folks leave the trail in many places to travel the much smoother river bottom," Baird said. "This reasoning follows that if the trail was groomed, people would stay on it to access the higher country with more recreational snowmobile opportunity."

"I patrolled this area last Saturday," Baird said, "And there 14 vehicles at the trail head and lots of families and enthusiasts enjoying the already good snowmobiling conditions. The trail had been recently groomed and made for great traveling. I observed and documented quite a bit of moose activity all along the river and even a few moose still north of the camp ground. The trail is very well signed, informing the public about the requirement of staying on or east of the trail. I did observe a few tracks where violations had occurred, but all in all there seemed to be good compliance."

"Snow conditions were great, but running hard on the groomed surface was causing some overheating issues where folks need to leave the trail to get into softer snow to cool their machines down," Baird said. "I think this may have contributed to some of the tracks west of the trail. I contacted several groups that were very happy about the trail being groomed and took every opportunity to talk about the winter range issues. The end result is very positive; it is great to have the snowmobile trail groomed for people to use and enjoy, while keeping wintering wildlife in mind."

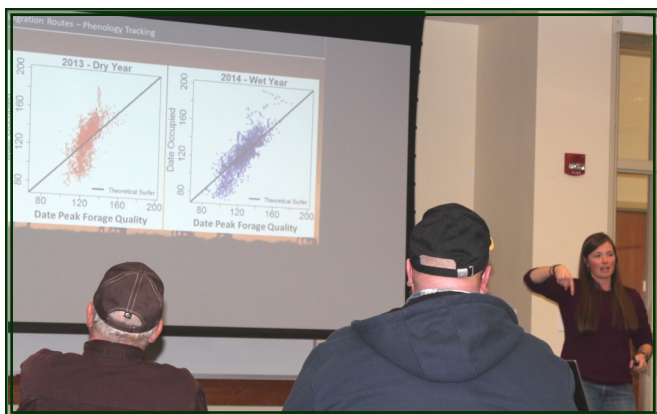
Ermine in action ~ Very cool!

Baggs Game Warden Kim Olson was fortunate to observe this long-tailed weasel, *Mustela frenata*, which had just killed a cottontail rabbit. "The weasel worked to drag the cottontail off to a safe eating location," Olson said. "The cottontail was *three times his size*, so it was so cool to see! I wish I had known where he wanted it taken to, because I would have helped him!" 😊



Long-tailed weasels are brown and have a rusty orange-colored belly during the summer months. In winter, they turn totally white, except for the black tip on its tail, to blend in better with their snowy environment. This weasel eats small mammals, like voles and pocket gophers. They also eat rabbits, birds, beetles, grasshoppers, carrion, and even frogs. Weasels are classified as a furbearer in Wyoming. Wyoming's weasel trapping season in *hunt area 1 runs October 1 through March 31*. A resident furbearer hunting or trapping license costs \$44.00 and the resident youth furbearer hunting or trapping license costs \$6.00. There is *no Conservation Stamp requirement* with the furbearer animal hunting or trapping license.

Post Hunting Season Public Meetings ~ Wyoming Range Mule Deer Research Project Update



Personnel in the Green River Region recently held two post hunting season public information gathering meetings to gather feedback from people on how their hunting season went. (photos left, top two) An update on the Wyoming Range mule deer herd research project, which was initiated in 2013, was presented in Kemmerer and Green River by University of Wyoming graduate research student Samantha Dwinell. (photos left, bottom two)

Information on the Fontenelle Fire, planned future habitat improvement projects in the Wyoming Range, population management, and the upcoming population objective review public input process were also presented.

The goal of the Wyoming Range Mule Deer Project is to investigate nutritional relationships and understand how they affect population dynamics, and ultimately the capacity of the current range to support mule deer in western Wyoming. Phase 1 is complete and Dwinell and fellow researchers are into Phase II of the project. Dwinell says that Phase II aimed at determining the contributions of habitat, nutrition, and predation on survival of deer fawns. You can find detailed information on these projects and more at the University of Wyoming Cooperative Research Unit at the link:

<http://wyocoopunit.org/labs/monteith-shop>

Public hunting season open houses will be held in the Green River region the week of March 14, 2016. Stay tuned for meeting dates, times and locations.

Mule Deer Trapping near Baggs Continues ~ Now in its fifth year



Univ. of Connecticut volunteer Rachael Smiley drops some apple pulp



Baggs Wildlife Biologist Tony Mong and Baggs Game Warden Kim Olson worked with University of Wyoming wildlife students and volunteers on a continuing mule deer research project. "So far, the course-scale movement data have revealed a possible difference in movement patterns and timing of migration between buck and doe mule deer within the Baggs mule deer herd," Mong said. "To date, no study has looked directly at the fine scale migratory patterns of mule deer bucks. The project is now in its 5th year and we are very thankful for funders, like the Muley Fanatic Foundation; the Southeast Wyoming Chapter contributed \$10,000 and the Southwest Wyoming Chapter contributed \$5,375 to this project.

Workers set the drop net and bait the deer capture site with apple pulp (photos left, top two). Mong watches the net with binoculars from a distance and when enough deer are under the net, he drops the net by remote control. Workers then put an ear tag and PIT tag into the leg of the deer and then release it. The PIT tag will allow Mong and other researchers the ability to go online and track the movements of the deer anytime. Mong has collared more than 200 mule deer since 2011 and now the project is focusing on fine-scale migratory patterns of mule deer bucks in the Baggs herd.



Office manager Sheila Watts holds a fawn until it can be tagged. (photo above) Tony Mong and UCONN Professor Chad Rittenhouse release a deer. (photo below)





Office managers Sheila Watts (left) and Regina Dickson (right) have been busy since the new year, answering questions about current ice conditions, Life Time licenses, and boat registrations. The girls invite you to stop in and pick up your 2016 licenses and Conservation Stamps.

<http://wgfd.wyo.gov>

Office Phone: 307-875-3223

Office Fax: 307-875-3242

Toll Free In-State 1-800-843-8096

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We are on the web! <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>



stay connected



~Critter Spotlight~

Northern flicker

By Mark Zornes a.k.a. Leopold

- *The northern flicker* has two subspecies, both of which are found in Wyoming. Red-shafted flickers (the western subspecies) can be found in all parts of Wyoming, while the yellow-shafted flicker is restricted to the east. As their names imply, red shafted flickers have red wing and tail feathers (especially the feather shaft), and yellow shafted flickers have (you guessed it) yellow ones. Male yellow-shafted flickers have a red nape and black mustache mark. Red-shafted flicker males have no red nape and a red mustache mark. Females of both subspecies have no head markings.
- *Northern flickers* are the only woodpecker species that spend any significant portion of their time on the ground. This common species is often seen far from trees on the ground searching for ants and other insects. Ants make up nearly 1/2 of their diet. Other foods include fruits, nuts, and seeds.
- *This species is easily identified* to species and subspecies, especially in flight. They have a typical undulating woodpecker flight and display a white rump patch and their brightly colored underlings and tails.
- *Often called a "yellow hammer"* in the east, this species is one of the only woodpeckers that migrates. Birds in Canada leave that area for warmer climates in the south during winter. Most of the continental US have these birds year-round.
- *Flickers drum with their beaks* on trees and other hard objects, including the sides of houses and even tin buildings! This can make them unpopular with human neighbors since they can damage homes and barns, and tend to drum very early in the morning.
- *Northern Flickers nest in cavities* (as do other woodpeckers) and produce 5-8 young annually. Unlike other woodpeckers, flickers occasionally use bank burrows for nest sites.